

There are those who think that in Canada, too, the time has come for provincial and federal governments to take more decided steps in this matter. Out-and-out new provisions for fraternal societies were omitted from the Dominion insurance bill passed by the Commons last session. Partly, this was to avoid obscuring regular insurance issues, and partly to give the fraternal every opportunity to get their houses in order by their own efforts. That the societies realize the need for doing something is evident from the rate-raising measures passed at convention after convention.

In nothing is the misfortune of a wrong start more apparent than in the history of most fraternal orders. And, as in the case of a man caught in a morass, the very making of any effort to get on a safer road, is apt to result in a getting "deeper into the hole." Not long ago the Independent Order of Foresters took measures—only half-way measures, be it noted—to rectify past errors. The most apparent result thus far has been a drastic falling-away in membership. Other orders, too, are failing to absorb the quantity of "new blood" necessary to give them the "hectic flush of fancied health."

Including both Canadian and foreign activities of eighteen orders which operate in the Dominion, certificates amounting to \$106,700,000 were issued during 1908; while certificates for \$138,000,000 were terminated. That is, for every \$100 of new insurance issued, \$129 terminated by maturity or lapse. How much longer can this go on?

SOCIETY.	Amount of Certificates Issued.	Per cent. of Terminated to Issued.
Independent Order of Foresters.....	\$ 15,143,677	225
Maccabees.....	22,435,365	147
Royal Arcanum.....	19,186,500	141
Royal Templars.....	427,125	131
Knights of Pythias.....	16,318,500	127
Ancient Order United Workmen.....	1,947,000	120
Catholic Mutual Benefit Association...	1,560,000	120
Canadian Order Oddfellows.....	549,500	112
Woodmen of the World.....	868,250	106
Home Circles.....	1,458,000	90
Commercial Trav. Mutual Benefit.....	176,000	87
Sons of Scotland.....	713,000	82
Grand Orange Lodge.....	576,000	67
Canadian Order of Foresters.....	6,192,500	66
Chosen Friends.....	3,132,068	62
Catholic Order of Foresters.....	13,056,750	57
Oddfellows.....	2,616,000	53
Sons of England.....	343,000	34
Total.....	\$106,699,235	129

AN INTERESTING PROPOSAL is to be put on the agenda at the forthcoming international conference of underwriters to be held at Baden-Baden in September—the advisability of lowering premiums on those steamships carrying a wireless telegraph installation. As the conference is attended not only by underwriters, but also by ship-owners and shippers, there should be an enlightening discussion on the question.

FIRE INSURANCE COMPETITION IN FAT YEARS AND LEAN.

To the repeated protestation of fire offices that tariff co-operation does not involve monopoly, many critics turn a deaf ear. Underwriters, however, can certainly point to recent developments in Britain as showing that tariff companies could not (even if they would) achieve monopoly in any sense. Past months have brought considerable accessions to the non-tariff ranks. In the two years following upon the San Francisco disaster, current underwriting operations with most established companies were exceedingly favourable. As in all such periods, there is apt to be a forgetting of the essential fact that only by substantial profits in such seasons can companies recoup past conflagration losses and build up impregnable reserves against disasters yet to come. Consequently last year brought considerable accessions to the non-tariff ranks, and their competition promises to be active enough—for a time at least. If, however, the new competition follows the precedent of some pronounced non-tariff "spurts" in times past, the outcome will scarcely be any permanent success. According to The Record, of London, most previous campaigns have been carried on with the one idea of making 10 to 30 or 40 per cent. reductions from tariff rates—the only limit being the extent necessary to secure a preference from the assured. It could not reasonably be that such tactics would succeed for any length of time—and final collapse served to make clearer the necessity of reasonable rate-making based on a comparing of companies' experiences. Such non-tariff companies as have made good have come more and more nearly to approximate the rates of the tariff offices.

From now on, extreme wild-cat competition is less likely to be attempted than heretofore. The Board of Trade's new legislation requiring deposits and publicity of accounts will tend to obviate that. It may be assumed that companies starting under such conditions contemplate an entirely legitimate business. Whether they attempt it by cutting materially below tariff rates (and meet with failure) or whether they come close to the premiums of other offices (and achieve success)—in either event they will prove the non-existence of the monopoly bogey.

That 1909 is likely to prove a time of testing for other than strongly established offices, is the view of the keenest observers of British insurance affairs. While trade and industry in the United Kingdom are now showing signs of betterment, recovery from depression has been more belated than on this side of the Atlantic. And, as the Post Magazine points out, bad years in fire insurance have a fashion of lagging behind general business depression.